

Docket No.: 99P7530US01
App. No.: 09/280,256

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

After entry of the above amendments, claims 1-9 and 12-17 are pending. New claims 16-17 were added above, without introducing new matter, to claim the invention more extensively.

Item 1 of the Office Action rejected claims 1, 3-9 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) (hereinafter, "Section 103(a)") as being unpatentable over Cox et al. (US Patent No. 5,790,781) (hereinafter, "Cox") in view of Harmeyer (US Patent No. 4,491,694) (hereinafter, "Harmeyer") and further in view of Brown (U.S. Patent No. 5,822,406) (hereinafter, "Brown").

Item 2 of the Office Action rejected claim 2 under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of Harmeyer and further in view of Brown and further in view of Bowater (U.S. Patent No. 6,282,269) (hereinafter, Bowater).

Item 3 of the Office Action stated that Applicants' previous arguments have been considered but are moot in view of new ground(s) of rejection.

Item 4 of the Office Action listed contact information for the Examiner.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 3-9 and 12-15 were rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of Harmeyer and further in view of Brown. Claim 2 was rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of Harmeyer and further in view of Brown and further in view of Bowater.

Cox is has been discussed previously. Cox discusses a computer to which both a headset and a speaker is attached.

Harmeyer discloses an amusing home-brewed, do-it-yourself speakerphone system that seeks cost savings by using an ordinary "home entertainment variety stereo", some "interconnecting wires", and a home-made junction switch to implement a speakerphone. (See Harmeyer, Abstract.) In speakerphone mode, Harmeyer's home stereo's left channel is in use to amplify the microphone, and Harmeyer's home stereo's right channel is in use to amplify

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① the speaker. In non-speakerphone mode, Harmeyer's home stereo is not used at all, and neither the left or right channels is used. In short, Harmeyer's system uses either both channels, or neither channel.

Brown discloses a centralized switching circuit that "routes audio and data signals between a modem and various devices coupled to the modem". For example, Brown can switch between a headset and a speaker. (See Brown, Field of the Invention, col. 1, lines 17-18.) However, Brown's switch has nothing to do with any left or right channels.

The Office Action conceded that Cox "fails to teach specifically routing only one stereo channel to speakers 18 or only the other stereo channel to a headset [headphone]". Applicants respectfully agree.

The Office Action contended, however, that:

... it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Cox reference with the teachings of Harmeyer and Brown ... because such a modification would have enabled the system to function as a standard telephone (headset with microphone) or a speakerphone (loudspeaker with microphone).

Applicants respectfully disagree.

② There is simply no suggestion whatsoever in any of Cox, Harmeyer, or to obtain a system in which "a providing of an audio signal to only one of said left or right channel corresponds to a providing of an audio signal to only a corresponding one of said loudspeaker or said headset", as is required by claim 1. Indeed, the Office Action did not allege any such suggestion.

③ There is similarly no motivation provided by any of Cox, Harmeyer, or Brown to obtain the system of Applicants' claim 1. For example, Brown teaches a complete interconnection system that accomplishes its task in a clean elegant manner without any such feature of Applicants' claim 1. Indeed, one of the major goals of Brown is to alleviate the pre-existing hodge-podge of connections that confront a user. (See Brown, col. 1, lines 56-57: "this [prior] type of arrangement is very cumbersome and burdensome".) Thus, Brown actually teaches away from Harmeyer's system, which is a tinkerer's hodge-podge of everyday

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components that were assembled due to Harmeyer's "idea [which] came as a result of [the inventor's] telephone and ... stereo being physically next to each other [and the inventor's thinking] 'I wonder what would happen if I connect these wires to this?'" (Harmeyer, col. 1, lines 52-55). Furthermore, Harmeyer has nothing to do with any computer. Instead, it has to do with a home stereo and an analog telephone.

Similarly, there would be no expectation of success from the combination and modification proposed by the Office Action, because adding the hobbyist's gadget of Harmeyer with the elegant system of Brown could not be expected to alleviate the cumbersome-ness or burdensome-ness against which Brown was fighting. Similarly, adding the switch of Brown to the gadget of Harmeyer in the way proposed in the Office Action, would render Harmeyer's gadget non-functional, because Harmeyer's gadget requires both of its stereo's channels to operate at the same time, in order for the speakerphone to work, or none of the stereo channels to operate, in order for the phone to work.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over the cited art. Applicants further respectfully submit that all remaining claims, including new claims 16-17, are allowable at least for similar reasons.

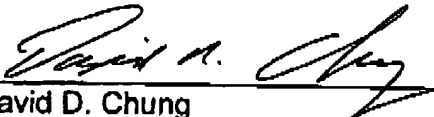
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CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' claims are allowable. Applicant respectfully requests that the application be passed to allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, he is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

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